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# IS 502 Christian Formation: Vocation of Ministry

Virginia Todd Holeman

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**IS501 Vocation of Ministry**  
**3 hours – 1:00-3:45 pm – Wednesday**  
**M103 [Royal Auditorium]**

**Co-faculty:**

Toddy Holeman, PhD

Office: Stanger Hall 406

Office Hours:

Tues, 1:15-2:15; Wed., 11-12; Thurs, 1:30-2:30

Sign-up posted on office door or see Cindy Jackson.

[Toddy.Holeman@asburyseminary.edu](mailto:Toddy.Holeman@asburyseminary.edu)

858-2212

Reg Johnson, PhD

Office: Administration Building, 404

Office Hours:

Tues, 3-3:50; Thurs, 10-10:50; Fri 11-11:50

Sign-up posted on office door.

[Reg.Johnson@asburyseminary.edu](mailto:Reg.Johnson@asburyseminary.edu)

858-2219

**Anticipated Enrollment: 70**

**Course Description**

This course seeks to ask and address the question, How is our vocation as those called to Christian ministry discerned, shaped, and sustained? The purpose of this course is to explore from a Wesleyan perspective the biblical and theological foundations of Christian personhood and vocation by examining the nexus between call to ministry and formation of persons in ministry.

**Course Objectives**

Having successfully completed this course, you should:

1. Understand the nature of Christian vocation (including God's call of all Christian disciples to ministry in church and world) from a Wesleyan perspective;
2. Grasp the relationship between critical reasoning and spirituality and understand their importance for theological reflection on the vocation and practice of ministry;
3. Demonstrate sensitivity to cultural, ethnic, and gender issues with regard to their importance for the vocation of ministry;
4. Understand the importance of moral formation and integrity for Christian ministry, with a clear understanding of boundary issues related to ethical conduct;
5. Demonstrate commitment to "the way" of the Christian disciple through immersion in the means of grace;
6. Be able to articulate a coherent narrative of one's own call into God's ministry; and
7. Project a curricular plan consistent with vocational discernment.

**Mode of Instruction**

1. This course will be co-taught by two professors.
2. The class will be taught using three modes of instruction: (a) We will meet together as one large group for some levels of instruction and interaction; (b) The class will be organized into discussion conferences using ExL technology. These e-mail based discussions will be facilitated and monitored by the course instructors; (c) The class will be organized into covenant discipleship groups that will emphasize "works of piety" and "works of mercy," which are integral to the course. At least part of the covenant group meeting time will overlap with scheduled course time.

## Means of Student Evaluation

### 1. Student Participation – 25%

#### Related to course instruction

- Your attendance at all class sessions is expected. If you are absent [for whatever reasons] for more than three sessions (or the equivalent) you will receive a failing grade.
- You are expected to attend 2 of the 4 chapels during Kingdom Conference (Oct. 16-19 @ 11:00 a.m.). While we would prefer your actual presence in chapel, you can attend chapel “virtually” through Asbury Seminary’s web site. Given the close connection between Module 3 and the themes of Kingdom Conference, we encourage you to participate as fully as possible in Kingdom Conference activities.
- By the conclusion of Module 3 (Oct. 17-Oct. 31) you will have attend two services in a church(es) that is(are) ethnically different from for you. This will be the basis for your reflection in your “In-Process” paper for Module 3. If you are currently worshipping in a cross-cultural setting (e.g., international students or other ethnic minority) you should speak with the instructors for ways in which you need to adjust this assignment.
- You are expected to fully participate in discussion conferences using ExL technology that are integral to each module.
- You are expected to attend your covenant discipleship group. These groups are student lead. Meeting time is built into our Wednesday class period. If you miss more than three sessions (for whatever reasons), you will not receive credit for this component of the course.
- Participate in the 4-hour social justice project with your covenant discipleship group.
- The reading requirement for this course is 1200 pages. You will submit a reading report to document the degree of your completion of required course reading. This reading report is due at the end of the semester.

#### Related to academic advising

- You will select an academic advisor by the end of the semester and have had one documented conversation with your advisor about your call to ministry and your seminary curricular plan. This is due by the end of the semester.
- You will present a curricular plan consistent with your understanding of your call to ministry (as you currently understand it) and have it signed by your official faculty advisor. This is due by December 5, 2001.

### 2. “In-Process” Papers – 30%

You will prepare three five-page “in-process” papers that integrate course content, your understanding of your vocation of ministry and assessment surveys where appropriate. The first paper is due at the end of Module 1 and the second paper is due at the end of Module 2. The third paper is due at the end of Module 3.

*Module 1 paper is due on September 26, 2001.*

*Module 2 paper is due on October 17, 2001.*

*Module 3 paper is due on November 7, 2001.*

3. Major Position Paper – 30%

You will write a 12-15 page major position paper on your call to ministry *due on November 28, 2001*. This paper will integrate all class material to date, including assessment surveys. You are expected to demonstrate the use of additional research material, in addition to assigned texts, to support your paper.

4. Creative Project – 15%

Presentations will be made *on Dec. 5 and Dec. 12*. Your covenant discipleship group will choose an artistic mode (painting, sculpture, poetry, creative writing, photo essay, original music composition) in order for your group to give expression to your understanding of “vocation of ministry.” Or, you may choose a project that communicates course-related material (devotional guide that focuses on “call” and “vocation”; series of lesson plans that deal with “call” and “vocation” for an age-specific class, etc.). Your work should not only reflect your collective and personal reflections but it should also include appropriate aspects of our course content. It is expected that this will be a fresh work. You are to get approval of your idea before proceeding. This project represents an important course assignment because it taps into other learning styles beside the visual and auditory. Each person in the group is expected to invest a *minimum of 8 hours* in the preparation of the project. Some will spend much more time than that. Projects will be shared in class at the end of the semester.

In addition to the presentation, each group will submit:

1. An individual log of your time investment and a brief description of your contribution to the group project.
2. A clear and succinct statement of the purpose of your project.
3. Learning objectives for observers (artistic) or participants (sermon series, etc.).
4. For art based projects: Submit a detailed discussion of the message you are portraying about “vocation” and “call.”
5. For text based projects: Submit the text material.

Creative Project Grading Criteria:

1. How substantial was your individual contribution to the project? (Did your contribution help to move the group project forward to completion in a significant way?)
2. How well did your group present the project to the class? (Did it reflect “one” mind or did it seem pieced together and disjointed?)
3. How well did your project integrate course content and personal reflection? (Does your project demonstrate an understanding of course content in addition to your personal journey?)
4. How well prepared was the written material your group submitted in conjunction with the project? (Style of writing, spelling, grammar, etc.)

## Required Texts

- Grenz, S. & Bell, R. (1995). Betrayal of Trust: Sexual Misconduct in the Pastorate. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Guinness, O. (1998). The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life. Waco, TX: Word.
- Smith, G. (1997). Listening to God in Times of Choice, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Smith, J. B. & Graybeal, L. (1991). A Spiritual Formation Workbook: Small-group Resources for Nurturing Christian Growth. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.

## Required Reading on Reserve ELECTRONICALLY through the BLFisher Library\*

- Brookfield, S. D. (1987). Developing Critical Thinkers. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. ISBN: 1-55542-356-6; pg. 3-50; 89-110 [Ch 1,2,3,6] \*\*
- Chilcotte, Paul John Wesley Speaks on Christian Vocation
- Collins, K. J. (1998). Spirituality and Critical Thinking: Are they really so different? Evangelical Journal, 16(1), 30-43. ISSN: 0741-1758
- Farley, J. E. (1988). Majority-Minority Relations (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall. ISBN: 0-13-545625-8; pg. 1-48; 172-197. \*\*
- Groothuis, R.M. (1997). Good news for women: A biblical picture of gender equality, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker; 19-63; 121-144; 189-229. [Chapters 1, 2, 5, 8, 9] \*\*

\* “Electronic Reserve” means that you can access these materials through the Electronic Reserve Shelf of the Seminary’s Virtual Library.

\*\* We are also listing these as Recommended Texts so that you have a choice between electronic or paper versions.

## Grading Policy

### Papers

All papers must be typed, double-spaced, 1” margin all around, using a 12-point font, such as Times New Roman. Papers must adhere to MLA format according to Slade [available in the ATS bookstore and in the library].

Between them, Drs. Johnson and Holeman will grade all submitted work and will seek to return your papers to you in a timely fashion. A 1/3 deduction in grade will be assessed for every work day that your paper is late. Late papers receive a grade, but no written feedback. If you need to negotiate an alternate due date with us, please see one of us BEFORE the assignment is due.

### E-Conferences

Drs. Johnson or Holeman will monitor and grade the team interaction and discussion assignments that occur via e-conferences. You will be graded on your individual contribution to the overall discussion content and on your contribution to facilitating the group discussion process.

### Incomplete Policy

A grade of “I” denotes course work has not been completed due to an **unavoidable** emergency, which does not include failure to turn in course work or attending to church work or other employment. See the Asbury Seminary Catalog for further clarification.

## Covenant Discipleship Group Guidelines

1. By the second week of class, you will be placed in a Covenant Discipleship Group of 6-7 persons. Because spiritual formation is an important part of this course, we have set aside the final 45 minutes of class time for you to meet. We hope that your schedules will permit you to meet longer than 45 minutes – as that is a bare minimum – and a longer meeting time will facilitate group cohesion and trust building. We have also built this time into our weekly schedule to facilitate your ease of meeting so that no one has to juggle his or her schedule to find a meeting time outside of class.
2. Your group will use A Spiritual Formation Workbook: A Renovare Resource for Spiritual Renewal. Renovare means “to renew.” Each person will have a copy of the workbook.
3. The purpose of this group is to meet together to learn the six traditions of the Church, do the related disciplines, hold each other accountable, and encourage each other.
4. The group will meet for one introductory meeting, then for the next nine times it meets the group will focus on the six dimensions of discipleship: prayer, virtue, empowerment, compassion, proclamation, and wholeness – as we see in the life of Christ – and seek to grow in them by practicing the disciplines that flow from his life.
5. Each group will be student lead. We anticipate that you will share leadership among all group members. At the conclusion of each session a volunteer will be sought to lead at the next session.
6. The leader guides the group through the exercises for sharing that are given in the workbook.
7. One student in each group will take attendance. Please note that if you miss more than three sessions (for whatever reasons), you will not receive credit for this component of the course.
8. Each person should read in advance the chapter to be discussed.
9. Each group should covenant to keep group conversations confidential among group members.

A commitment to social justice is one of the emphases of Renovare and our Wesleyan tradition. Each group will select a service/mission project. The project is to be completed AS A GROUP and must involve at least 4 hours of service outside the Asbury Seminary community. For example, your group can serve dinner at the Ronald McDonald House in Lexington, work for a soup kitchen, help out at God’s Pantry, provide housekeeping or lawn care for a home bound person, etc. Please clear your project with either Dr. Holeman or Dr. Johnson. The group secretary [a.k.a. attendance taker] will collect from each person a 3x5 card confirming participation in the 4-hour project and describe one thing about the experience that stands out for him or her.

## E-Conference Discussion Team Guidelines

1. By the second week of the course you will be assigned to an e-conference team. You will need to have a seminary e-mail address to access the class folder on First Class Client.
2. Complete the systems test by the second week of class.
3. Each week your team will discuss the question as it is listed in the syllabus, assigned in class, or posted within the course folder.
4. This class feature calls for good “e-manners.” Please limit each posting to 50 words or less [unless instructed to do otherwise]. Remember that your team members do not benefit from hearing your tone of voice or seeing your body language, **SO BE CAREFUL HOW YOU PUT THINGS IN WRITING!!!!** You may be perceived as shouting, when you only meant to add an emphasis.
5. Drs. Holeman and Johnson will monitor and grade the team interaction and discussion assignments that occur via e-conference. In addition to an overall “team grade,” you will be graded on your individual contribution to the overall discussion content and on your contribution to facilitating the group discussion process.

For example:

1. Did you give a succinct, understandable statement that reflected of how you understood the text content as it relates to the discussion question?
2. Did you reflect critically on the interface between course content and personal experience?
3. Did you post your own answers/responses in a timely way, so as to promote conversation among the members of your team?
4. How effective were you in generating ideas/proposals for group interaction?
5. How effective were you in your engagement with the ideas/proposals generated by others on your Team?
6. Did you respond to your Teammates as per the instructions for the exercise?
7. Did you attend to issues of form and style appropriate to formal writing?

## Accessing Electronic Reserves

Directions for accessing electronic reserves:

- 1) Open First Class ATS Email
- 2) Double Click on "Intranet"
- 3) Double Click on "Resources"
- 4) Double Click on "Online Reserves"
- 5) Double Click on “Professor” wanted [Holeman]
- 6) Double Click on "Course #" [IS502]
- 7) Double Click on "Article" wanted



## **Module 1: Understanding the Nature of Christian Vocation from a Wesleyan Perspective** September 5, 12, 19

### **Goals:**

At the completion of module 1, you should:

1. Integrate your sense of what God desires with your personal giftedness;
2. Discuss the relationship between personal responsibility and choice in how you respond may respond to a perceived call of God;
3. Articulate how God is moving in your life regarding your vocation by using the aspects of vocation based on the Wesleyan quadrilateral.

### **September 5: The Nature of Vocation and Call.**

This session provides an introduction to the concept of “call.” We will also get organized!

**Reading List:** Guinness, Ch. 1-7

**In Class Organization:** Organize class into small covenant groups. Organize class into e-conference teams.

**E-Conference:** You will be assigned to a team by next class. In the meanwhile, open the course folder and check it out. Become familiar with our First Class Client e-mail system.

### **September 12: A Wesleyan Perspective on Vocation and Call**

This week focuses on Wesley’s understanding of vocation and call

**Reading:** Chilcote, Chapter 1; Guinness, Ch. 8-14

**Listening in preparation for this week’s e-conference:**

You will listen to Dr. Johnson’s 1995 chapel sermon on call. You can do this through audio-stream via our class folder in First Class Client [*Open our class folder. Open Course Center. Open Folder for Module 1. Click on Dr. Johnson’s message.*]. You can check it out from BLFisher reserve shelf. You can buy the tape from Media Center, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Beeson Center. See the Course folder for e-conference questions.

**Covenant Group Focus:** Begin *Renovare*

**Complete the Self-Directed Search for use in class on Sep. 19.**

### **September 19: Vocation, Call, and Me**

This session introduces you to the idea of personal vocational strengths, spiritual gifts, and their relationship to vocation and call

**Reading List:** Guinness, Ch. 15-22; Smith, Ch. 1-3; Chilcote, Ch. 2

Rom 12, I Cor 12:4-11, 28; Eph 4:11 (also I Cor 1:5-7; 12:29-30; I Cor 13:8; II Cor 8:7; I Thess. 5:20; I Tim. 4:14; II Tim. 1:6-7; Heb 2:4; I Pet 4:10-11)

**E-Conference:** Check Course folder for this week’s discussion question

### **Module 1 Means of Assessment: In-process position paper #1 – DUE SEPTEMBER 26, 2001**

Using the material from weeks 1, 2, & 3, develop a vocational position paper that reflects your current understanding of your call to the vocation of ministry and that also integrates this with the Self-Directed Search and your sense of your spiritual gifts. Be sure that you clearly content from the required reading for this module. Typed-double space, 1” margins, 12 cpi font. 5-page limit.





## **Module 2: Grasp the relationship between critical reasoning and spirituality and understand their importance for theological reflection on the vocation and practice of ministry**

September 26, October 3, & 10

### **Module Goals**

At the completion of this module, you should

1. Articulate your own decision making process and the relative weight of critical thinking, spirituality, and theological reflection in their small groups and in writing.
2. Demonstrate your understanding of the roles of critical reasoning, theological reflection, and spirituality on your call to ministry through case study analysis.

### **Sept 26 Introduction to Critical thinking & vocation**

Today we will introduce the skill of critical thinking.

#### ***Reading***

Smith, Ch. 4-6; Brookfield, 1, 2, & 3

***E-Conferences:*** See Course Folder for Conference Topic

### **Oct. 3 Critical thinking, vocation, & spirituality**

Now we will add the influence of spirituality to our thinking about critical thinking and vocation.

***Reading:*** Brookfield, Ch. 6; Smith, Ch. 7, 8; Collins article. BE sure you read the Collins article before coming to class!

***E-Conference:*** See Course Folder for Conference Topic

Complete the DISC for Oct. 10 class

### **Oct. 10 Critical reasoning, spirituality, and me**

Finally, you will discover more about yourself through the DISC survey and combine this practical information with the previous two week's discussions to reflect upon your call to ministry.

***Reading:*** Smith, Ch. 9, 10; Chilcote, 3

***Assignment:*** Bring your completed DISC with you to class.

***E-Conference:*** See Course folder for conference topic.

### ***Means of Evaluation for Module 2 – Second “In-Process” Position Paper – Due October 17, 2001.***

Using the material from Module 1 AND Module 2, develop a vocational position paper that reflects your current understanding of your call to the vocation of ministry and that also integrates this with the DISC and your use of critical thinking and spirituality. Be sure that you integrate required reading from this module. Typed-double space, 1” margins, 12 cpi font. 5 – page limit.



### **Module 3: Demonstrate sensitivity to cultural, ethnic, and gender issues with regard to their importance for the vocation of ministry.**

**October 17; 24; 31**

#### Module Goals:

At the completion of this module, you should

1. Describe key issues and problems, which affect ethnic minorities and their leadership;
2. Explain the reality of racism and gender issues, their origins and the negative impact they have on building the Kingdom of God;
3. Discuss how racism affects inter-ethnic and inter-church relations and how to effectively minister in such contexts.

During this module [or before] you will attend two worship services in church(es) that is culturally different from you.

#### **October 17: Ministry in the Worldwide Kingdom of God**

Vocation of ministry in a multi-ethnic, global Kingdom of God

**Required Reading:** Farley, pg. 172-197, Chilcote 4

Attend 2 of the 4 Kingdom Conference Chapels (October 16-19 @ 11:00 a.m.)

**E-Conference:** See directions in Course folder

#### **October 24: Ethnic realities in America**

**Reading:** Farley, pg. 1-48

**E-conference:** See directions in Course folder

Cultural Self-Assessment – see Course folder. Complete and bring to class.

#### **October 31: Gender and the Vocation of Ministry**

Men & women working together in the Kingdom of God. Biblical foundations for women in ministry

**Reading:** Groothuis

**E-conference:** See directions in Course folder.

#### **Means of Assessment for Module 3—Due November 7, 2001:**

During this module you will attend twice the worship services of a church where the church is ethnically different from themselves. Their paper will focus on their experience of being a minority in this congregation, their awareness of prejudicial beliefs or myths and how they plan to address them, and their projection on their relative ease or discomfort of working with women in ministry.



## **Module 4: Understand the importance of moral formation and integrity for Christian ministry, with a clear understanding of boundary issues related to ethical conduct**

November 7, 14 & 28, 2001

Goals for Module 4:

By the completion of the module, you should

1. Discuss the importance of the character of and the maintenance of a sense of wholeness by a Christian minister;
2. Identify ways to maintain emotional and physical boundaries with people;
3. Identify ways in which boundary violations occur;
4. Explain the relationship between moral formation, individual integrity, and the vocation of ministry.

### **November 7: Moral formation & integrity**

*Reading:* Grenz & Bell, Ch. 1, 2

*E-Conference:* See Course Folder for directions

### **November 14: Morality & Boundaries, Part I**

*Reading:* Grenz & Bell, Ch. 3, 4, & 6

*E-Conference:* See folder for directions.

### **November 21: READING WEEK**

### **November 28: Boundary issues, Part II**

*Reading:* Grenz & Bell, Ch. 5 & 7

*E-conference:* See Course Folder for directions

Major Position Paper – Due November 28, 2001

You will write a 12-15 page major position paper on your call to ministry. This paper will integrate all class material to date, including assessment surveys. You will integrate readings and insights from Module 4 into your final integrative paper. You are expected to demonstrate the use of additional research material, in addition to assigned texts, to support your paper.



## **Module 5: Articulating a coherent narrative of one's own call into God's ministry**

### **December 5 & 12 (finals week)**

Each Covenant Discipleship group will work together to develop a creative presentation of their understanding of their vocation of ministry.